

CABINET

Thursday, 6 November 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	
	Councillors	S Holbrook G Davies P Davies G Gardiner	M McLaughlin R Moon J Quinn J Stapleton
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	J Crabtree F Doyle L Fraser P Gilchrist JE Green T Harney	S Mountney L Rennie J Salter H Smith C Teggin K Wood
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor	S Kelly	

248 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October had been printed and published. It was noted that Minute 213 (Land at The Warrens, Thingwall Road East) had been called in and would be considered by the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2008.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

249 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any of the items on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

The following declarations were made:

Councillor Moira McLaughlin - a prejudicial interest in Minute 250 (Follow up of disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)) due to a friendship with a potentially interested party and left the room whilst the matter was considered;

Councillor George Davies – a personal interest in Minute 252 (Secondary Review – Phase 1) due to his appointment as a governor of one of the schools mentioned in the report.

Councillor Steve Foulkes – a personal interest in Minute 251 (Progress towards the transformation of Adult Social Services) due to his wife's employment.

250 **FOLLOW UP OF DISCLOSURE UNDER PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT 1998 (PIDA)**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported that information had been passed to himself and the Deputy Chief Executive the previous day which had potentially serious consequences. Appropriate and effective action had been taken which included suspension. The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management strongly advised the Cabinet to defer consideration of this matter.

Resolved: That consideration of this matter be deferred.

251 **PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**

Delivering the Transformation of Adult Social Services was critical to the Council's strategic objective: To improve health and wellbeing for all, ensuring people who required support were full participants in mainstream society. In particular the programme gave focus to the improvement priority of 'promoting greater independence and choice'. The Director of Adult Social Services presented a report which involved a number of key decisions, first identified in the forward plan in December 2007.

The decisions required as a consequence of this report would enable the Director of Adult Social Services to deliver cashable efficiencies over the medium term as outlined in his report to Cabinet of 4th September 2008. These were integral to achieving a stable and sustainable budget, and to contribute to the Council's projected budget deficit reported elsewhere on the agenda. The report also responded to a request from Cabinet at its meeting of 25th September 2008 for further analysis of the Department's Value for Money Profile as published by the Audit Commission.

With the permission of the Chair, Kevin Jackson and Joe Taylor of UNISON addressed the Cabinet and the Director of Adult Social Services responded accordingly.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion outlined the work undertaken to transform Adult Social Services and supported the recommendations.

The Leader of the Council indicated that in view of the Council's financial situation, maintaining the status quo was not an option. He indicated his commitment to service users and council tax payers. He requested the Director of Adult Social Services to identify where savings in the management structure could be made.

The Deputy Leader of the Council referred to other occasions where the Council had tendered to deliver services and that the evaluation process would not be purely based on price.

The Director of Adult Social Services confirmed the multi-faceted nature of the process to be developed as a full and detailed project with the involvement of service users. He confirmed that there would be management cost reductions along with other efficiencies as a consequence.

With the permission of the Chair, the Leader of the Conservative Group addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Green queried the support that would be available to enable staff to prepare an in-house bid and this was confirmed by the Director of Adult Social Services.

The Deputy Leader of the Council queried the transitional arrangements that would be in place to minimise any disruption to service users and the Director confirmed that they would be helped to develop where appropriate the services they required.

Resolved: That the proposals to outsource in-house provided services by open tender as set out in the report be agreed in principle, subject to a further report being brought to Cabinet outlining in particular the staffing, service and financial implications.

252 **SECONDARY REVIEW - PHASE 1**

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which advised the Cabinet of progress on the Phase 1 Area Review of secondary school places in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas. Following the report from an independent consultant, the report put forward a recommendation for an option for consultation, and commented briefly on some of the issues involved, including the proposed Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls and the implications of the National Challenge.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning indicated that this was the start of a process that would be considered in manageable blocks. He was determined to raise standards in schools and felt that the proposal for new Academy in Birkenhead was an exciting option. He indicated that there would be thorough consultation with all Stakeholders and was pleased with the support of headteachers.

Councillor George Davies referred to the proposed Academy being for the age range 11-16 and it was agreed that the recommendation would be amended accordingly.

Resolved: That

- (1) the Director begins formal discussions with the DCSF and potential sponsors with a view to the establishment of a new Academy in Birkenhead with an age range of 11 to 16;**
- (2) Cabinet confirms that, in principle, the Council would wish to become a co-sponsor of the Academy;**
- (3) detailed feasibility work begins with a view to establishing the size of the proposed Academy and its location in order to create an official Expression of Interest for an Academy;**
- (4) in the light of (3), consultations begin on the closure of Rock Ferry High and Park High School in order to establish a new Academy for their pupils;**
- (5) the Director undertakes formal discussions with the Girls Day School Trust and the DCSF to explore the future relationship between Birkenhead High School and Prenton High School and the relationship of both with the Authority;**

(6) the Director brings back a further report to Cabinet on the implications of the above proposals on other schools and colleges;

(7) the revised Expression of Interest for Building Schools for the Future be the subject of a further report to Cabinet;

(8) the above recommendations be the subject of a detailed consultation exercise with key stakeholders and a further report be brought back to Cabinet on the outcome of this including any other suggestions raised during the consultation phase.

253 PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCIES

Cabinet on 12 December 2007 approved a projected procurement savings target of £2.25 million for 2008/09. The Director of Finance presented a report which informed Members of progress towards achieving the savings target and outlined future plans and targets for efficiencies, within the Procure to Pay (P2P) activity in line with the Procurement Strategy approved by Cabinet on 4 September 2008.

Resolved: That

(1) the procurement efficiencies delivered in 2008/09 be noted;

(2) the procurement efficiencies from corporate contracts estimated at £1.5m be agreed for 2009-10.

254 PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009 - 2011

At the request of the Chair, the Director of Finance provided the Cabinet with details of the Council's investments in Icelandic Bank.

The Director of Finance then presented the projected budgets for 2009-2011 to coincide with the period of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR).

It was reported that the Council had won an LGC Award for Investment Officer of the Year and the Cabinet requested that their congratulations be forwarded to the appropriate officer.

The Leader of the Council moved a motion, duly seconded, and it was –

Resolved: That

(1) In the light of the continued urgent need to close Wirral's £21million budget gap and avoid placing an unreasonable burden on Wirral's council tax payers, and in the light of the recommendations on Item 4, Progress towards the Transformation of Adult Social Services and Item 8 Procurement Efficiencies, Cabinet recommends the following to Council:

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES	
	£
In line with Cabinet report on item 4, paragraph 13.2, adopt the Fair Price model of Supported Living with Independent Supported Living Providers.	650,000
In line with Cabinet report item 4 paragraph 13.3 put in house Supported Living Services out to tender. This is a half year saving from September 09 to allow time for process.	347,000
In line with Cabinet report item 4 paragraph 7.2 put all Adult Social Services Transport services out to tender. This is a part year saving to allow time for the process.	180,000
In line with Cabinet report item 4 paragraph 14.1.d) fund the cost of Individualised Budgets from Reform Care Grant	1,500,000
Fund the Reform Team directly from the Efficiency Investment Budget in 2008/9	360,000
Fund Reform Team from Efficiency Investment Budget in 2009/10	518,000
FINANCE	
	£
Fund Change team from Efficiency Investment Fund in 2008/9	635,000
Fund Change team from Efficiency Investment Fund in 2009/10	635,000
Fund Procurement and Creditors from Efficiency Investment Fund in 2008/9	1,022,000
Fund Procurement and Creditors from Efficiency Investment Fund in 2009/10	1,022,000
Fund Customer Services Development from Efficiency Investment Fund	183,000
Fund Customer Services Development from Efficiency Investment Fund	183,000
Corporate Procurement Efficiencies	1,500,000

REGENERATION.	
	£
Conference and Seminar Attendance	10,000
Reduction in Training	28,000
Maximising external grant	107,000
Reduction in advertising as a consequence of Wirral Homes decision to stop advertising in the Globe. (Council's contribution no longer required).	10,000
Review of administration.	138,000

(2) Cabinet asks the Director of Children's Services to :

- i) Explore the possibility of extending the current PFI contract with the governing bodies of the 9 schools involved and with the Council's PFI partners and report back to Cabinet on the outcome.**
- j) Look at the current policy and costs of Home to School Transport and report back to Cabinet on any potential ways of reducing expenditure.**

(3) Cabinet asks that the efficiencies contained within this motion be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committees for urgent consideration before Council meets on December 15th.

255 ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Finance presented the Annual Report for 2007/08.

Resolved: That the Annual Report 2007/08 be agreed.

256 AREA BASED GRANT

The Director of Finance presented a report which updated Members on changes to the composition and value of the Area Based Grant for 2008/09. The report also recommended Members to approve the allocation of the 2009/10 and 2010/11 grant in accordance with the indicative allocations provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Leader of the Council moved a motion and it was –

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the allocation of Area Based Grant in 2009/10 and 2010/11 be on the indicative basis identified by the Government as outlined in the report;**

- (2) a report setting out a Business Case Methodology for the allocation of Area Based Grant in 2010/11 and subsequent years be brought to a future meeting of Cabinet in the current financial year; and**
- (3) In agreeing the allocation of area based grant of the next two years it is noted that this includes future funding for Tranmere Together. This further funding should be provided with a proviso that staff from Tranmere Together should work closely with Council officers to help transfer learning between the organisations with a view to informing any future development of neighbourhood and area based working through Area Forums.**

257 REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE NORTH WEST – PARTIAL REVIEW – CONSULTATION ON INTERIM DRAFT POLICIES

The Secretary of State published the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) on 30 September 2008, replacing Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13, March 2003). The new RSS provides the framework for development and investment in the region over the next fifteen to twenty years. It would form part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral alongside the Council's Unitary Development Plan and would have implications for the determination of individual planning applications and other decisions under the Planning Acts, with immediate effect.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services presented a report which summarised the main content of the new RSS and set out the implications for future decisions, policies and initiatives in Wirral. The Director recommended that the policies of the new RSS were used in development control decisions for all planning applications determined after 30 September 2008; that the principles and priorities of the new RSS were incorporated into the Council's Local Development Framework; that the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development be reviewed subject to the outcome of a public inquiry at Rockybank Road; and that a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment for Wirral be prepared as part of a joint commission with Liverpool City Council to reflect the arrangements already agreed for the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

Resolved : That

- (1) the policies of the North West of England Plan be used in development control decisions for all planning applications determined after 30 September 2008;**
- (2) the principles and priorities set out within the North West of England Plan be incorporated into the issues and options to be addressed by the Council's Local Development Framework;**
- (3) the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development be reviewed following the outcome of the public inquiry at Rockybank Road and that a report on the review be brought back to Cabinet before public consultation is undertaken; and**

(4) a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment for Wirral be prepared as part of a joint commission with Liverpool City Council to reflect the arrangements already agreed for the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

258 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

259 YOUTH SERVICES GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which outlined recommendations for the allocation of the grants to Voluntary Youth Sector organisations from the Youth Service for the 2008/09 financial year.

Resolved: That

(1) the deferred capacity building money of £30,000 be added to the approved £14,000 ring-fenced for some of those organisations previously grant aided; and

(2) the £44,000 (above) be allocated to the six organisations at the levels recommended in Appendix 1 to the report.

260 HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services provided an update to Cabinet on the progress of the Hoylake Golf Resort project. It also sought endorsement of Cabinet to the appointment of and subsequent expenditure upon DLA Piper UK LLP for specific legal work and advice in order to progress this opportunity through the EC Directive for Competitive Dialogue.

Resolved: That the principle of the golf resort project continue to be supported and the appointment of DLA Piper UK PPL to provide specific legal work and advice for this project be endorsed.

261 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Leader of the Council referred to the special meeting of the Cabinet scheduled for 12th November 2008 to consider the Strategic Asset Review. The Leader of the Council indicated that he wished to refer this matter to a joint scrutiny committee comprising of Finance and Best Value, Corporate Services and Culture, Leisure and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with a Chair for the meeting to be appointed at the meeting. He requested that Democratic Services make the appropriate arrangements for this meeting to take place.

Resolved: That the necessary arrangements be made for the joint scrutiny meeting.

